The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

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An Alpine Sunset.

The lights o'er yonder snowy range
Shine yet, intense and tender;
Or slowly passing, only change
From splendour on to splendour.

Before the dying eyes of day
Immortal visions wander;
Dreams prescient of a purer ray,
And morn spread still beyond her.

Lo! heavenward now those gleam expire,
In heavenly melancholy,
The barrier-mountains, peak and spire,
Relinquishing them slowly.

Thus shine, O God! our morta powers,
While grief and joy refine them—
And when in death they fade, be ours
Thus gently to resign them.

A. DE VERE.

Reality.

Love thy God, O love Him only,
And thy heart shall ne'er be lonely;
In that one Great Spirit meet
All things mighty, grave and sweet.
Vainly tries the soul to mingle
With a being of our kind;
Vainly hearts with hearts are twined;
For the deepest still is single,
An impalpable resistance
Holds like natures at a distance.
Mortal, love that Holy One,
Or for ever dwell alone.

A. DE VERE.

What will Remain?

IF BIBLICAL CRITICISM AND SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY SHALL OVERTHROW THE CURRENT THEOLOGY OF CHRISTENDOM, WILL THE FOUNDATIONS OF RELIGION BE DESTROYED?

What is there in Christianity that makes it so transcendently important? We need not search long for a reply. What we require is the satisfaction of our moral and spiritual natures. This includes the experience of a good conscience, the environment of a morally sound and spiritually educated community, and an assurance of a blessed immortality. If conscience is no longer to rule, if her peculiar satisfaction is no longer to be enjoyed, if the distinctions between right and wrong are to be obliterated, if all that has been gained in civilisation by slow, painful processes is to be lost, if a belief in immortality and future blessedness is to be surrendered, what a spiritual desolation is open to view!

But suppose surrender involves the loss of none of these,—suppose conscience will yet rule, suppose right will still be better than wrong, suppose civilisation will lose nothing of what has been gained, suppose immortality and blessedness and a future life are as secure as before,—would not the situation have more of hope and confidence than our

imagination may have pictured? If assurance could be had that the essential things will remain, that strife will cease, and that men will return to the pursuits of gentle peace and brotherhood, then perhaps we might be willing to consider a proposition to revise our theological creed, and to readjust our ideas on points now shown to be of minor import.

Why do men hold to the theological doctrines of the past and love them? The doctrine of the fall of man, if dear to any heart, is dear simply because of its supposed necessary connection with a scheme that promises future blessedness. True, we have revered it. We have connected it with all that we have held sacred; but, if its abandonment is attended with no evil consequences save the mental struggle it might occasion, we might be willing to say farewell to it. The same is true of the miraculous birth of Jesus. Our interest in that doctrine is wholly due to the supposition that such a birth was necessary to the perfecting of the scheme upon which our present experiences and our hopes for the future are based. Even so central a doctrine as that of the atonement is of value to us only because we have regarded it as a means to a much desired end. If it shall apear to our satisfaction to be unesential, its surrender would not be a serious loss. The physical resurrection of Jesus is only of value on the supposition that it is essential to salvation.

It may be said that such concessions would be fatal. That the terms do sound harsh and cruel to some must be admitted. But on the supposition that the surrender of these cherished doctrines were made, and we, like Adam and Eve, driven from the Paradise of our Christian security and hope, were compelled to go forth into the world, let us look about and see what, if anything, would remain.

Many things would remain. Really, would any of the most important and vital things be destroyed? Let us see.

Human society would remain. We should still pursue the daily routine of life. We should still care for present interests, "buy and sell and get gain," provide food, clothing, shelter, for our wives and little ones, and means of education for our children, just as before. Public business would go on, public schools continue, legislatures meet, courts sit, laws would be enforced, and law-breakers sent to prison or to the gallows. The proposition to abolish belief in a supernatural revelation, supernaturally attested is one thing. A proposition to disband human society is quite another. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them," would remain the Golden Rule for the regulation of human conduct.

The problem of *human destiny* would remain. That to some it would appear to be rendered more difficult of solution is true; but it would still be here. The final answer to that problem might not greatly differ, if it differed at all, from that at present accepted. Certain forms of proof, or supposed proof, of a doctrine may fail, while the doctrine itself may not be overthrown. For example, that which we have hitherto relied upon as proof of a state of future blessedness, and as the finger-post pointing the way to it, may prove to be insufficient; but, nevertheless, the doctrine may be true. If the old evidence becomes worthless, the opportunity remains to present other testimony, which, while it may not be quite so direct, may, nevertheless, be quite as assuring, and have besides the merit of invulnerability. We say again that the question of human destiny would still be with us. Men would continue to ask, "If a man die, shall he live again?" They would indulge a great hope, as did enlightened minds among pagan nations before Christianity came. So long as the doctrine of immortality is not positively proven false, men will entertain the hope of its truth. The overthrow of the orthodox idea of Christianity does not prove atheism. It simply remands the inquiry regarding religious doctrines back to its status previous to the emergence of Christianity. Practically, not so far back as that, inasmuch as by the enlightenment, brought in by Christianity, we are far better able to deal with such a question.

We should continue to have a standard of *authority*. Hitherto a supernatural revelation has been that standard. In the supposed change which we are discussing the standard would be the inerrancy of the human reason. At once we hear the exclamation, "How impotent a guide is human reason!" But you will have judged too quickly. In some departments of knowledge its absolute inerrancy will at once be admitted. Take the subject of pure mathematics for illutration. Is not human reason absolutely correct in that sphere, and do we not know that it is? And would all the revelations heaven could give move us one jot to deny what mathematically is

proven? The sum of the angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. Are we not absolutely sure of that? The square on the hypothenuse of a right-angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides. Is anyone found denying that? Could a revelation add anything to its certainty? Could a revelation declaring that it is false overthrow our conviction of its truth? In such a sphere human reason is unerring: the result of its action is invested with the quality of absolute certainty.

Take the fundamental propositions of logic for another illustration. "Whatever is, is equal to itself;" "a thing must either be or not be;" "a thing cannot both be and not be at the same time." Can there be any doubt about the truthfulness of such propositions? Our whole mental constitution would have to be reconstructed before we could doubt these axiomatic truths. Kant, the great German philosopher, declares that metaphysics is capable of establishing on principles just as obvious, just as unerring, just as necessarily true, as those of mathematics and of logic. True, he will not affirm this of the speculative reason, because a great many things enter into a train of reasoning which give occasion for errors, just as a problem in mathematics may, in the course of its solution, admit errors which vitiate the conclusion. But what he styles the practical reason, the institutional power of the human mind, lays down principles in the realms of pure thought which are just as certain as mathematical or logical axioms. There is nothing of vital importance to the welfare of mankind which may not be brought at last to the judgment of this unerring faculty.

Some of the greatest minds of the English race and of the English church have affirmed again and again that all revelation must be judged by human reason. It is not meant by this that prejudice does not obscure and warp judgment, or that reason's dictum is to be accepted on every question that may be presented, because some are matters of speculation only, about which errors may be made.

The *Scriptures* will remain to us in essentially their present form. They will remain to utter their truths just as they have for centuries. Whatever change may take place will be in our opinions as to the origin of these Scriptures, the mode of their composition, and the kind of reverence we shall bestow upon them. They may not be regarded as of miraculous origin or supernatural authority. They may not be considered as divinely inspired in the old miraculous sense. But is not truth true, even if it be not supernaturally imparted? Can we not know that some things are true, even if not made the subject of a special revelation? We have esteemed the Bible, because we have regarded it as God's own word. We have marvelled at its goodness and rejoiced in its wisdom. Because of its tenderness and sympathy and its wealth of knowledge, we have thought better of a God who could reveal such sublime truths to man. But suppose, on the other hand, that God has never visibly nor specially exerted himself in dictating a book; that his activity in this matter has never been greater than it now is, nor of a different kind. Suppose the human mind, working on themes so transcendent, has produced what we esteem to be worthy of God, does not this create great hope of man and his divine possibilities? If men could produce the Bible, is the race so badly off? As history, as poetry, as philosophy, as a code of morals, as an inspiration to an exalted religious life, the Bible is not only invaluable, but is an exhibition of the power of the human mind that suggests man's near relationship with the divine. The Bible, indeed, is a book, not of less value than we have been accustomed to believe, but of far greater value than one with orthodox presuppositions can discern. It may fail to prove certain statements, which, relying upon its testimony, we have hitherto regarded as historical; but there are many things which its testimony does so firmly establish that no serious question of their truthfulness will ever be raised. The truths of the Bible are no less true, though they were discerned, and expressed in writing, by men.

Jesus Christ will remain to us, and he will be as ever the captain of our salvation. No one doubts the historical reality of Jesus of Nazareth. He may not have been born of a virgin, he may not have worked miracles nor fulfilled prophecy, he may not have risen from the dead; but nevertheless he remains the spiritual head of the race. He knew the pathway of life as no one else has known it. His feet travelled with eager haste along this pathway, and his encouraging voice and illumined soul call to all men to follow him, and to share with him its blessedness. If God has revealed

himself in nature, why may he not reveal himself in man?

There is *a pathway of life*, and men have found it. Jesus found it. Its savingness (and it *is* a way of salvation) depends not on Jesus' supposed divinity nor upon any alleged supernatural revelation, but on the very nature of the way itself.

"Walk in this way, and thou shalt own
Thy darkness passed away."

We revere and all but worship other men for what they were and for what they have done for humanity. May we not continue to adore the person and obey the precepts of him who has done so transcendently much more for us than any other benefactor? In this view there is just as great assurance of a blessed immortality as in the old, while our conception of the character of Christ and the future life is brought more into harmony with the demands of enlightened thought.

One thing more will remain, and that is *experience*. We shall still know that right is better than wrong. Conscience will work just as truly and steadily as before. Of the truth of the pronouncements of human nature we can always assure ourselves. Experience demonstrates them. We shall still have the fellowship of kindred minds—minds that share the same passion for righteousness which burns with undying ardour in our own souls. We shall still hope and believe that "God is not far from any one of us," the great central sun of righteousness, of whose fellowship we shall assure our hearts continually.

Having now passed in review some of the things that remain, nothing is left but to consider in a word or two the advantages of the new way over the old.

It would be a welcome relief to many persons not to be required to believe longer in some of the things related in the Bible. The account of the creation is a sore trial to enlightened minds. They know it is not true to fact; yet they know not how to save anything out of the wreck, if they let one plank go. The character of Jehovah, as revealed in the Old Testament, is a trial to Christians who have really considered it. How many innocents were ordered slain by him, and others subjected to abominable abuses! If we could be excused from having to believe that the sun and moon stood still, that the shadow went back on the dial, that a man lived three days in the belly of a whale, that Samson performed the legendary and mythical exploits ascribed to him, it seems that there would be few who would not rejoice. If we could be permitted to disbelieve that there were devils that possessed men, that supernatural horrors attended the death of a man on Calvary, that the bodies of saints arose and came into the city, that the pocket handkerchiefs of an apostle cured the sick upon whom they were laid, would it not be a relief to a sadly overtaxed credulity?

If we could free our minds from the supposed necessity of holding views with regard to Deity that reduce him to the proportions of a despot of the Oriental type, who administers the affairs of the world as did Darius those of the Persian Empire, who makes an unalterable decree, and then, to save his reputation for consistency, devises a scheme whereby he can save both the letter of his law and the victims of it,—I say, if we could lay aside any necessity for believing in this unutterable pettiness and folly and barbarism, surely all might rejoice.

Thus, as the result of our inquiry, we seem to find many strong reasons for believing, and believing confidently, that nothing connected with religion or the Bible will be swept away by the Biblical criticism and scientific inquiry of our time except those things which have really been a burden and a hindrance, and that everything which is true and vital to religion or permanently helpful to men will remain, and remain in a form to be more unencumbered and more effective than the past has known.

AN ORTHODOX INQUIRER.

"The Sower" of Millet, or Labour,

BY HARROLD JOHNSON.

"The great remedy for the rural exodus is to be found in giving the country labourer a better opinion of himself and his work."—E. A. Selby Lowndes, "The Rural Exodus," in the *Westminster Review*, August, 1901.

"The Sower," as was said in a previous paper,* represents the solemn dignity of all true labour and its divine significance in the universal plan.

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." So runs the immemorial decree.

* "The Angelus" of Millet, or Worship, appeared in the October number.

Man has grown to his present stature by an unceasing contest with nature, and by an unceasing co-operation with her. Let him but stay his hand, and where but now the corn in golden glory waved, and the green grass spread its tender carpet over the earth, thorns and thistles shall crowd in rank luxuriance.

The labourer is worthy of his hire; but if a man will not work neither shall he eat. To every man comes the stern challenge: "What equivalent do you render to society for your keep?" Everywhere, whether he be rich or poor, and more particularly if he be rich, the drone is the bane of society. From of old the decree went forth: "In toil thou shalt eat;" and be assured, that wheresoever labour and food, sowing and reaping, maintain not their true ratio, the very foundations of society are undermined. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

Let me set before you Millet's picture of "The Sower," or Labour.

Night is coming on with mournful majesty. The sky is swept with dark, wind-driven clouds, save for one glowing, quivering break of golden light in the western sky. Over the newly upturned furrows lies a shadowy purple, vague and formless. The clayey ridges glisten dank and chill in the sunset light. The long, straight, deep-marked plough-lines stretch away up the brown slope and fade in the distance. Further afield a ploughman guides a plough with a yoke of oxen.

It is late autumn. The first breath of winter bites the waning earth. The dead leaves rustle mournfully and weirdly on the pathway. Some are already skeletons, and only the fibres of their delicate tracery remain. Briar and hawthorn are scarlet with hips and haws where the snowy, drowsy clusters of the may and the fair, frail pink and white wild roses blossomed in the spring and summer-time. It is the dying end of things, and a wistful sadness broods over all. But even now, while the shadows of night darken and darken in the expiring year, when all speaks of death and burial and dissolution in the tomb, even now the divine preparations for resurrection and returning spring are going on. Again the may shall cover the hedges as with snow; again the fair, frail, pink and white wild roses shall garland the briar; again the billowy, golden corn shall wave in the summer breeze; and, again, it shall be said as it was said of old:

> Lo, the winter is past,
> The rain is over and gone;
> The flowers appear on the earth;
> The time of the singing of birds is come.

The deep-rooted faith of humanity that the setting sun shall rise again, that the buried seed shall spring again, and this highest faith of all that our dear, dead brother and sister live again seem to me established and sure in the very heart of things. Night and day, winter and spring, sowing and reaping, death and life.

That is why Millet chose the nightfall for this picture—to emphasise the mournful, hopeful significance of life.

Here is an emblem of the Pilgrim's journey. As Mr. Worldly Wiseman said to Christian: "Thou art like to meet with on the way which thou goest wearisomeness, painfulness, hunger, perils, nakedness, swords, lions, dragons, and, in a word, death and what-not." And it is well for us if, like the good John Bunyan, we can say after it all:—"I would not have been without this trial for much; I thank God every time I think of it, for I have learned many lessons by it."

From the sowing of the seed in the cold earth to the springing of the first green, tender blade, long, dreary days and nights of winter, frost and driving snow, piercing, pelting rains and biting winds, no song of birds, burial in the tomb with the death-shroud and the seal. But ever, if with patience we wait, in due time, the springing of the blade, the glory of the corn, the Celestial City. We shall reap if we faint not.

The sower, conscious of the dignity of his calling, marches with measured stride along the furrows, scattering the seed with lavish, yet careful hand.* Unawed by the shades he looms grandly above the horizon. You see him swinging along down the slope. His every movement is rhythmic with ease and mastery, as harmonious and majestic as Milton's epics, or Beethoven's symphonies, or the Venus of Milo.

* *Vide* Victor Hugo's poem on the Sower, with which Millet is said to have been familiar. (Saison des Semailles. Le Soir). Note especially these lines:

> "Sa haute silhouette noire
> Domine les profonds labours."

And (L'ombre)

> "Semble élargir jusqu' aux étoiles
> Le geste auguste du semeur."

You can almost hear him humming, or whistling, some remembered tune, keeping time to martial music, august and solemn, strong and free. A son of the soil, formed of the dust of the ground, close to the mother-breast; patient as the hills, steadfast as the growing tree, firm as the rock, a limb of mother-earth herself, rooted in her, as close to her as her century-oaks, earthy, smacking of her, loving her from whom he was taken and unto whom he shall return; no trace of fatigue apparent in him, though now it is nightfall, and he has laboured through the day, still full of reserved power, wasting no energy, calm, self-contained, a master of life; his feet pliant in the sabots, his trousers tight to catch no breath of wind, his jersey loose and yielding as he swings, his vest open, his neck bare and free, his slouch hat shading his eyes—he inhales great draughts of space as the wind whirls by him.

Behind him a flurry of rooks, but he has cast with too liberal hand that he should fear them—the harrow will soon hide the seed, and the tenter will scare them.

There is in him every indication of the master-man, of perfect adjustment to environment—no novice, one who has served his apprenticeship and received his indenture long ago—a man born to his work which fits him as a well-fitting glove the hand; free, no man's slave, and lord of none; the poise, the confidence, the thoroughness, the sanity of a man. There are in him all the innate qualities of a great warrior and ruler, of a Cincinnatus of the Plough, who, having fought and won and ruled, would return to the plough again; or of an Elisha, ready to leave twelve yoke of oxen in the field should Elijah's mantle fall upon him; or of a Cromwell, who, though Lord Protector of England, as he told the Commons, would rather have kept a flock of sheep under his own woodside.

This man's children would not dream of disobeying him, his wife could not be a sloven, his cottage could not but be cheery and inviting, this man could not be intemperate, this man could not lie, this man could never be otherwise than simple and direct as Nature herself. In such men as this sower is the foundation of all empires, the stepping-stone of all character. His body is firm-knit and strong; his brain is sure-fibred. Virtue, honour, reverence, and love spring from him. Wife, children, and home are his centre and abiding-place. If I require evidence of a man, I need not scan the great statuaries, I need not study great heroes, I have only to look upon Millet's "Sower." No sculptor ever chiselled more heroic lines; an ease and strength are here that Phidias never surpassed.

Ecce homo! Behold the man! The man perfectly adjusted to his own sphere, beyond which a man cannot possibly go, however madly he tries. This man knows his measure. He is King.

It was once thought that beauty is exceptional. It is now seen that beauty accompanies every natural action, that the bowing of the worshipper, the swing of the sower, the stoop of the gleaner, the sweep of the reaper, the mother cooling with her breath the warm spoonful for her babe, the pushing of a wheelbarrow, the carrying of a pail of water, that natural action everywhere, caught at the moment of action in its natural surroundings, is beauty; is, as Millet himself described the beautiful, fitting. Millet seized this moment of action, the sower sowing, the gleaner gleaning, or, at times, he represented a momentary pause from action, as in the "Angelus" and the "Man with the Hoe," indicating that the action will be soon renewed, and everything in his picture is definitely related to this particular action, and adds to its significance. There is no filling in, no padding, no mere decoration; there is not a detail in his picture that is not essential to it, that is not part of it. Nature is a unity, and not a diversity. A man in his proper setting has an intimate relation with everything that surrounds him, and he is a part of all. There is a significance in every attitude and gesture in every fold of the garments, in every wrinkle of the skin. Great art is true nature. Nature never poses. In natural adjustment to environment lies beauty, in co-operation with nature and God lies beauty. The sower obeys every law of God he knows, if he would reap a rich harvest. He sows good seed in good ground. If he toil he must rest. If the soil is to remain fruitful it must lie fallow too, or alternate with turnips! The ground is properly manured and prepared. Through the long winter days and nights the seed lies buried, through frost and snow and

wind and rain, but the sower is never anxious lest the blade should spring, or lest the sun should rise or summer return. He never unearths the seed to see if the blade be springing. He has a supreme reliance on law, a faith and hope sure and fast. And it is as true in the moral as it is in the physical sphere that "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." In the moral sphere we cannot date times and seasons with the accuracy of the sower. We do not ever see the springing of the blade. Sometimes the winter snow and rain pervade a life, but there is always a glimmer in the west. "As the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud, and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth, it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it." We must wait. We cannot calculate the seasons of return, but the return cometh, "If not here, elsewhere, and if not now, some other time, we'll bide, nor fret nor groan, learning God's patience." The soul has its springtime, somewhere, somehow, somewhen. The soul has its resurrection too.

There is no nobler lesson than that of the sower. Jesus knew this. So did Paul. So did Millet. The eternal meanings are there.

Labour is often mournful and full of pathos, often with long weary winter months ahead, but ever the eternal hope, ever the springing blade.

Brethren, the sower's task is done,
The seed is in its winter bed.
Now let the dark-brown mould be spread
To hide it from the sun,
And leave it to the kindly care
Of the still earth and brooding air,
As when the mother from her breast
Lays the hushed babe apart to rest,
And shades its eyes, and waits to see
How sweet its waking smile will be.
The tempest now may smite, the sleet
All night on the drowned furrow beat;
And winds that, from the cloudy hold
Of winter breathe the bitter cold,
Stiffen to stone the mellow mould,
Yet safe shall lie the wheat;
Till, out of heaven's unmeasured blue,
Shall walk again the genial year,
To wake with warmth and nurse with dew,
The germs we lay to slumber here.*

Yes, it is all there. The waking smile, and the springing blade we shall see.

And if I shall be winter-locked,
As sometime I may be;
If bitter storms and freezing snows
Come whirling down on me—

Let me lie patient, like the earth,
And say, "This shall be rest,"
And then, O Lord, at Thy dear call,
Arise renewed and blest †

A Voice: Robert Browning.

June's holiday, fresh as her first wild rose,
Gives place to home's dear sheltered candle-light;
And though without lies coiled the enormous Night,
Within, sufficing, sure, the hearth-fire glows.
But, hark! the Ocean calls! The door must close
For ever on that hearth. A hidden might
Urges our bark across the perilous white
Sea-surges, where the unhousel'd night wind blows;
The moon's chill wizardry, the Pole-bent Plough,
Are quenched in cloud; below lurks huge blind Fear.
Home's left for aye, the hoped-for haven's far.
Sudden, a swirl! a ship! and from her prow
A voice, heart-strong, across the dark rings clear:
"Comrade, hold on! I see the morning star!"

DOROTHEA HOLLINS.

The Christian Name.

We often hear it said that where there is agreement about *things*, it is idle to waste discussion upon *names*; and it has been pronounced a matter of indifference whether liberal-minded church reformers organise themselves in "Free *Religious* Union," or in "Free *Christian* Union." The remark has neither reason nor experience on its side. In the world of physical objects, it is true, things dominate over names, and can take care of themselves, while their vocabulary shifts. But in the world

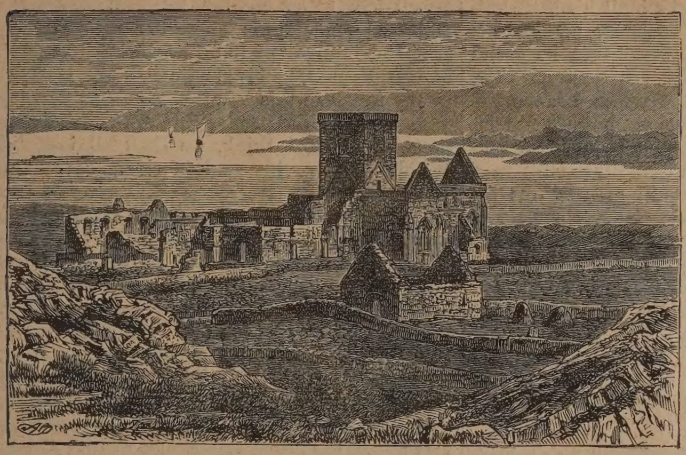
* Cullen Bryant. † I. Vila Blake.

of ideas—in philosophy, in morals, in religion—words dominate over things, and in their significance are even identical with things, and are as much the living organism of thought as the wing and throat of the bird are the conditions of action for its especial nature. Cynicism is seldom shallower than when it laughs at the "power of words" over what it contemptuously calls "the popular imagination." Power they certainly have. They are alive with sweetness, with terror, with pity. They have eyes, to look at you with strangeness or with response. They are even creative, and can wrap a world in darkness for us, or flood it with light. But in all this they are not signs of the weakness of humanity: they are the very crown and blossom of its supreme strength; and the poet whom this faith possesses will, to the end of time, be master of the critic whom it deserts. . . . The word "Christian" is the casket which holds for human thought the supreme treasures of the inner life of man, and the most precious gems of his external civilisation; and when all has been emptied out from it which zeal and mistaken piety have stored there for safe keeping, there yet remains, in the catholic genius of the religion, the richest historic deposit with which Providence has blessed the world. To part with that word, and throw ourselves upon philosophy to weave us a substitute, would be to interrupt the Past in its creation of the Future, and not only to migrate to unreclaimed countries, but to sink the old native land that we might do so. Part as we may with what once was demanded by the Church, there is something—and that, too, the very holiest influence in life—that is still with us; and this residuary truth, this Divine spirit, which emerges from the mixed inheritance of Christendom when all that is perishable has been discharged, does but own its descent, and look up with fitting reference to its fountain-head, when it claims the name of Christian. Possibly the same truth and the same affection may be reached by the meditative thinker as the fruit of a devout philosophy; by the Indian Theist, as a purification of his native faith; by the Mohammedan, as the inner meaning of his sacred oracles; by the Jew, as the natural development of the Law and the Prophets. If so, may God speed them all! But each will find his mission best among his own spiritual kindred. Here, in our land, we have to do, not with Mohammedans and Hindoos, but with Christians. We ourselves have been moulded by a Christian literature and civilisation. We love the Christian hymns and memories and prayers. We must appeal to Christian influences and susceptibilities. We must avail ourselves of such pure admirations and faiths as are ready-made around us, and point to the acknowledged symbols of Divine truth and beauty. And in this spirit, and with these resources, we elect to do our work among those who stand with us as partners of the same historical inheritance, and of the same undeniable essentials.—JAMES MARTINEAU.

"Saints and Shrines."

I.—ST. COLUMBA AND IONA.

Whoever cares for Christ must care for Christianity. Whoever cares for Christianity at its beginning in Palestine, must care for its beginning in his own country at home. How did it come into Britain? Who was its first apostle? Where was its cradle? And here is the answer in chronological order, omitting uncertain and unhistoric matter. The Apostle of Christianity in Ireland was St. Patrick, its patron saint. The Apostle of Christianity in Scotland was St. Columba, and its cradle was Iona. The Apostle of Christianity in England was St. Aidan, and its cradle was the Holy Island of Lindisfarne. But as Aidan himself was sent from Iona, both England and Scotland may be said to have been first converted through Columba. And hence, to English as to Scotch, there is no place more hallowed with sacred interest than this little island of the outer Hebrides away in the western seas. For there was raised the first Christian church, there held the first Christian service. There first shone the light which has never since been quite put out; there, on the very edge of the world as it seemed, with the vast and unknown ocean swelling mightily against its side—there was made the stand for the one true God. And if we go back to Iona we go back to Columba, for you have but to sweep away the few present buildings, and the island is just as it was in Columba's own days. The first interest of Iona is that there you are back at the beginning of things; the beginning for us of Christian hopes, of religious reverence, of civilised ideas. We moderns of a far later day are borne back as if by witchery, through century after century, right to the romantic, distant dreamland of history. There are not many spots in the



IONA.

world where man can do that—stand at the very start of a mighty movement, and when that movement is the Christian religion, bearing fresh faith and hope and love to the hearts and minds of nations and men, realise, if you can, what this must mean. What Jerusalem is to the pious Jew, and Mecca to the Moslem pilgrim, what Nazareth and Bethlehem are to the Christian of every nation, such is Iona to the Christian of Britain. It is the place where things divine and human compassion, and helpful training and humble learning first found their footing and a home in the life of our nation. "To tell the story of Iona," it has been truly said, "is to go back to God, and to end in God." Its second interest lies in the *age* of these beginnings. We have recently been commemorating the death of Alfred, our great Christian king, ten centuries in the past: but we must go back three centuries further ere we reach Columba. And this far distant time, it is difficult even to imagine, and I know not how to bring it home. But perhaps this fact will help us to get back. Britain had only just ceased to be a Roman colony. The Angles, or English, had landed, but not yet conquered. So we are really at the beginning, you see, not only of British Christianity but also of English history. The English nation, indeed no European nation, was as yet born. The people worshipped the so-called Gods of Nature—thunder and war—whose names we keep in the days of our week. And so we are peering into a dim and shadowy time, like the mist of the early morning, ere the full day has yet arisen, and there lies upon everything a waiting, solemn charm. But the light was to dawn forth not from the east, but the north—not first from Rome and Augustine, but from Iona and Columba.

Thus the next and personal interest lies in Columba himself. Owing to his faithful biographer, he is no shadowy spectre, but stands out clear from the picture as a real, living figure. There is no time to dwell on his career ere he landed on Iona. Born in 521 in Donegal, on the side of a hill overlooking three lakes, and overshadowed by dark mountains, akin through both parents to many powerful and even royal families, trained in the best monasteries and by the most learned abbots, his romantic and poetic temper fostered on old Gaelic lore, ordained to high office for his devoted fervour, birth, nature, training, career, all conspired in his favour, and made him the man of the hour. What led him to Iona? The precise reason is uncertain. It may have been a longing for seclusion, or, more probably, a desire to convert the heathen; or, possibly, an act of penance and contrition after some sin of omission; or even a sentence of excommunication, suggested later on, but disbelieved by his best historian. But the fact is certain that to Iona he came, and in 563, his forty-second year. Accompanied by twelve disciples, and in a boat of osier and hides, he dared the perils of the west coast seas, with their racing currents and sunken rocks, until, like Paul in the Acts, "they discovered a certain bay with a beach, and all reached the island safely at last."

So here, on Iona, Columba built his little hut, and opened his Bible afresh, and upraised his cross for God and Christ. How did he spend his days? For full details you must read the narratives in his life by his kinsman Adamnan—a book which Carlyle admired much and read often. Full as it is of simple wonders and incredible miracles, and a childlike faith in a Providence which arranges all daily life, it yet tells us what we want—the inner character of the saint. One only extract can I quote:—

"Though dwelling on earth he appeared to live like the saints in heaven. For he was angelic in appearance, graceful in speech, holy in work, with talents of the highest, and perfect prudence. He lived like a soldier of Christ during thirty-four years on this island. He never could spend the space of even one hour without study or prayer, or writing, or other holy occupation. So incessantly was he engaged night and day in these unwearied exercises that the burden of these austerities would seem beyond the power of human endurance. Yet still in all these he was beloved by all, for a holy joy ever beaming on his face revealed the joy and gladness with which the Holy Spirit filled his inmost soul."—*(End of Second Preface.)*

But he did not confine his labours within Iona's own shores. With a missionary zeal, like that of Paul, he took long journeys to spread the gospel, voyaging amongst the western isles, inhabited by Picts and Scots, and planting settlements of Christians in almost every place. Twenty-one amongst the Picts, thirty-two amongst the Scots, have been traced back to Columba and Iona, and in Ireland thirty-seven more. In each dwelt solitary monks, isolated by stormy seas, confirming by their own heroic lives the new faith of their converts. What a man was this! So quick and great was his influence that Iona soon became the resort for every Christian desiring a special blessing. Rich, poor, prince, warrior, learner, scholar—all turned to Iona. "By the black stone of Iona" became the most solemn oath a man could swear. On this famous stone Columba crowned a king; on this same stone, now in Westminster Abbey, will King Edward receive his crown next June. But Columba was more than a king maker: he, like Alfred, was an educator, a scholar, and Scotland's love of learning goes back in some measure to Iona. Saint, soldier of Christ, missionary, administrator, scholar, patriot—what was he not? For thirty-four dauntless years of service he continued his labours, and then, at the age of seventy-six, he entered into rest. Many are the pathetic legends of his farewell acts and sayings, even to bidding adieu to his sorrowing horse, for, like St. Francis, he loved all creatures. If there be any to whom this seem a matter of derision or disdain, let him ponder this word of indignation, in which, I think, we shall all join, "I would not have his soul in exchange for the dumb sorrow of that creature. One would fare further with that sorrow, though soulless, than with the soul that could not understand that sorrow."

Ascending a little hillock commanding a view of his church and settlement, he blessed it and said, "Unto this place, albeit so small and poor, great homage shall yet be paid. In great veneration shall it be held by the holy men of other churches." His farewell counsel was that charity that cannot fail. "These, O children, are the last words I commend to you, that with peace ye have mutual and simple charity among yourselves." On Saturday, the 8th June, 597, he was writing out the 34th Psalm and had reached verse 10—"They that seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good"—when he cried, "Here I must stop: the rest let Baithene write." He was found alone in the church next morning lying before the altar dying, and, moving his hand in final benediction, he passed away into heaven. And the Sunday after there landed in Kent, Augustine and his mission from Rome. Columba was laid in his beloved Iona, and for a century his grave remained there, venerated by every beholder; then his bones were taken to Ireland and enshrined. For 200 years after his decease Iona had peace, sending forth successive bands of missionary preachers, scholars, and founders of Christian communities into all parts.

Then—ah then, a wild change comes over the scene. The Norse pirates from Scandinavian ports swoop down again and again, and reduce almost everything to ruin. The buildings were despoiled, the Monks killed, the precious library burnt to the ground, Christianity routed and overturned. And yet we read that so sacred was Iona held by the Pagan horde that the King of Norway himself spared its church and burial ground. It afterwards underwent very many vicissitudes during troublous times, but was ultimately placed under the Bishop of the Isles, and now belongs to his diocese.

And so, when we visit the Iona of to-day—and that is the crowning interest naturally—we go back in thought through these successive chapters of its romantic history, we realise the large part this little island has played in the life of the mainland which it converted, we feel all the bravery, the simplicity, the poetry of its early Christianity. We are conscious of its special sacredness as, in true pilgrim spirit, we first set foot on this lonely spot. It is not easy to analyse and explain the almost solemn feeling which comes over one on sighting Iona for the first time and then landing on its rocky strand. It is the deep sense of reverence which says, "Put the shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." It is felt, or ought to be, by everybody. Even Dr. Johnson was overcome with emotion as he trod its turf for the first time, and felt it necessary to defend his feeling. "Far from me be such frigid philosophy as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied, whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona!"

The ruins you behold to-day are not those of Columba, but of many years later, yet they mark the spot where his primitive buildings were reared, and help us to picture his scene of labour. And it is a noble panorama which is seen from Iona, even under lowering storm and darkened sun; these add indeed to the solitude. And you may follow the same winding wastes, round the same storm-tossed headlands, enter the same sheltered creeks, sail by the same treacherous deep, and through the same swirling currents by which Columba himself must have sailed thirteen hundred years ago, and hear the same sky and sea sounding in majestic harmony as did Columba, for they are the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever. What wonder if one must moralise and feel more devout in their presence, and revel in all the lovely legends which to-day still haunt this Isle of the Blest! "I hoped that ever," confessed Dr. Johnson's biographer, "after having been in this holy place, I should maintain an exemplary conduct." Well, it is said that the history of Iona is over. In one sense, yes; in another, it will never cease. Columba's prophecy has come to pass. Unto this place *has* been paid great homage. On the 9th June, 1897, he received a fitting commemoration. The church ruin was roofed in, and a great and reverent gathering joined in English or Gaelic services, sang the Columba Psalm, and partook of solemn Christian communion. And so little Iona is not forgotten; it still speaks as few other places can; the poetry of its association is precious as the dew of Hermon; its history still feeds the spiritual need of men; its saint makes saintliness genuine—the highest human acquisition; its story goes back to God and ends in God. That is why we love Columba and Iona; that is why

> Pilgrims to his grave shall tell
> The prophet's meaning where he trod,
> And in Columba's spirit dwell,
> Safe isled, within the love of God.

F. K. Freeston.

Fog Possibilities.

Supposing the Fog were to last a year, and that, in the almost equally blinding shape of mist, it were to extend to the whole of the West of Europe. We dare say the meteorological conditions of our planet are such as not to admit of this,—we sincerely hope so,—and it seems not at all unlikely that the supply of moisture which the earth yields, and which is, we suppose, an essential condition of mist, could not possibly hold out anything like that time. But grant even half a year of continuous fog, of blinding mist and fog, and only conceive the helplessness of the human race under it. It is almost as bad as snow. The whole country would be in a bad way with a three or four days' heavy snowstorm, which it would take a good ten days to clear away so as to restore communications. But snow presents only a mechanical difficulty. It is a genuine physical obstacle to locomotion, though a provokingly and almost ironically fine one. Fog simply blinds without fettering. You may go where you please through it, only you don't know where the place is that you please to go to. All coasting service is absolutely stopped by it, and all river navigation. All the life of great cities would be paralysed till men had acquired the blind man's habit of groping their way,—and even blind men would find groping their way in a city of the blind

much more difficult than it is where they are the exceptions to the rule. How far even a country like England, having had no notice of the calamity, could get on for six months without foreign supplies we are very doubtful. It would be very odd receiving telegrams, as we might still receive them, both from the world in the fog and the world out of it,—though letters and more extensive communications would be at end in consequence of the interruption of the Channel navigation, unless, indeed, balloon posts could be organised, to rise *above* the fog, and that would be very dangerous, because when out of it they would not know what sort of country or sea lay in the black envelope beneath them, and would be afraid to come down. The lasting of an ordinary night would be far less obstructive, to cities and lighted roads at least, where artificial light would do as well for purposes of business as day itself. But in a lasting fog people would be almost as helpless as under a continuous snowfall. Supposing six months' fog had fallen on Europe during the Franco-German war. The Germans, in a hostile country, would have been like men with bandaged eyes. They could not, in all probability, have groped their way back home in time to save themselves from starvation. Indeed, if no notice of a long continuance of the fog had been received, it would seem so much more rational to wait for the expected lifting of the fog, even after a week's patience, than to tempt the dangers of a march back through a hostile country without the use of eyes, that most likely the German Armies would have really starved where they were on the field. It is very curious that an unfavourable condition like this, which operates equally on both sides, should have the effect, as it certainly would, of putting a stop to fighting altogether. It seems to be wholly impossible to do anything of this fighting kind without knowing the exact extent of the damage you have inflicted and suffered. We venture to say that Tennyson's fine account of King Arthur's last battle sufficiently shows that King Arthur was a dreamland King. No real armies would have fought in a mist so blinding that they could not distinguish friend from foe, or see each other's whereabouts:—

> A death-white mist slept over sand and sea;
> Whereof the chill to him who breathed it, drew
> Down with his blood, till all his heart was cold
> With formless fear; and e'en on Arthur fell
> Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought,
> For friend and foe were shadows in the mist,
> And friend slew friend, not knowing whom he slew.

The battle which closed King Arthur's reign was, no doubt, fought in such a mist, but no mere earthly battle ever was or will be. Human beings cannot fight against the unknown. Groping and fighting are inconsistent states of mind. Men will fight against vastly superior numbers, under conditions they see and understand; but not against even vastly inferior ones, if they do not know where, and when, and how they may come to close quarters with them. Night attacks are no exception to this. In the first place, even a dark night is not nearly so bewildering as a mist. Troops marked for the purpose easily recognise each other, and no night without mist is so dark as to prevent them from seeing sufficient to keep together in a body. But what is more to the purpose, in a night attack soldiers know exactly where they expect to find the enemy, and count on getting an advantage over them by the surprise. In a thick mist neither of the combatants knows where the other may be found, from what side he may come, or in what force; both sides are fighting against enemies far worse than the foe, the horrors of surprise and doubt.

But besides this paralysis of commercial and warlike operations, should the atmosphere ever continue to hold in it these blinding vapours for a few months instead of a few hours, so as to limit every man's eyesight to the range of a foot or so on every side of him, the whole machinery of social life would be all but stopped for that period, and a great deal of the industry of the world brought so nearly to a standstill as to cause, simultaneously, the most terrible privations, and something like the impossibility of relieving them. If the coasting trade became impossible, all the fisheries would be stopped, and the collieries could only work so far as the railways could distribute the coal. But the railways themselves would be full of danger in a mist so thick that you could not see the signals from the engine. The goods trains would go almost at a foot-pace, and the passenger trains would hardly go at all. Driving and riding would become nearly impossible, or at least would require almost as much courage and faith as a succession of deaths, for they would be a series of hurryings into the unknown. Even the cartage of provisions into the great cities, and their distribution when there would

become a matter of great difficulty. The graziers and country dairymen, whose cows were not all in stalls, would hardly find them, or the sheep on their pastures, in such a mist. No cattle, nor corn, nor cotton, nor rice, nor tea, nor sugar, nor any other raw material could reach our ports. If the country had exhausted its own supply of these things before the fog disappeared, we should have to starve, and even before that the artisans employed in working up these foreign products would lose their work.

In the meantime, public opinion would be nowhere, for not enough people would meet to form anything like an opinion that could be called public. Even the telegraph wires would only report the situation and opinions of a small knot of individuals, for neither in London nor in any other capital would there be any possibility of sufficient association to admit of gauging the general feeling. A strange sense of solitude would fall upon the face of the lands. A friend emerging out of the mist would seem to come from a different country, though it might be from only half a mile off. Nothing gives a supremer sense of loneliness than a veil suddenly dropped round you, which cuts you off from all command of the doings of the outer world, and the outer world from all command of your doings. If Parliament by an effort could meet in spite of the difficulties of locomotion, and discuss what a nation thus isolated from the rest of the world by the sudden blindness fallen upon a portion of it, wished, it would soon be apparent, we fancy, that for most purposes constituencies had ceased to exist, *i.e.*, to have any common life. No member would konw what his constituents wished beyond the cessation of the fog. What would be the use of talking of School Boards, when the constituency could neither get to the polls, nor, if they did, could the children get to the schools? As for the Army reorganisation, who would talk of it while a whole corporal's squad could hardly be seen at once, and men were doubtful if a review could ever come off again? As for the questions of our ironclads, who would think of them while the question was whether the main-top could ever be seen again from deck, or any ship could enter or get out of harbour again. The Budget would necessarily be thrown into confusion. Customs duties would be six months in arrear, and even the income-tax could hardly be raised while it took a voyage of discovery to find every house, and when the assembly of a public force to execute the law was as difficult an operation as a rendezvous of the blind. Grant a continuous fog, and even if corn ripened (which, of course, it wouldn't), or, in default of bread, you could live on root crops like potatoes, carrots, and turnips, which probably might still ripen, any true national feeling would undoubtedly die out very fast with the opportunities for travelling, meeting, and seeing the country through which men passed. The question as to the temporal power of the Pope could hardly interest men who were speculating whether his spiritual power could pierce a fog,—whether infallibility itself could thread with light a Cimmerian world.

Nothing seems to us more wonderful or less generally realised than the inevitable certainty that what seems a very minute change indeed in the meteorological conditions of the world, admitting of a little vapour hanging in the atmosphere during some infinitesimal fraction of the time during which our world has been building for us,—a year, or even half a year would be enough to make the shock felt in full force,—would turn society almost upside down, if it did not do a good deal towards depopulating the earth. War is bad enough, and destructive enough; but if a fog could hang for a few weeks above the surface of the sun so as to shut in the greater part of its light and heat, we should soon be aware that a handful of vapour might become a more threatening cloud of judgment than the worst exhalations of human passion.

Humorous Retorts.

A retort may be either civil or uncivil, courteous or discourteous, witty or severe. The simple meaning of the word is thus given by a compiler, "To return an argument, accusation, censure, or incivility; to make a severe reply." A few examples may not be uninteresting to the reader.

At repartee the Rev. Sydney Smith had few equals, and he must have been a bold individual who attempted to banter words with that celebrated humorist. His humorsome and deliberate manner of driving home a retort, a thick-headed squire once discovered, who, being worsted by him in an argument, revenged himself by exclaiming: "By Jove, if I had a son

who was an idiot, I'd make him a parson."—"Very probably," replied Sydney, "but I see *your* father was of a different mind."

Evidently, we cannot be too cautious when we "argue the point" with others, or too careful in the choice of an expression, especially with those who are reputedly known to be both sharp and clever. Sometimes the "tables are turned" when we least expect it. A severe home-thrust was once given to a young country clergyman, who happened at the time to be walking home from church with one of his elder parishioners. It was a very icy day, when the latter suddenly slipped and fell at full length on his back. The minister, at a glance, feeling assured he was not much hurt, said to him: "Ah, my good sir, pray give me your hand; sinners stand on slippery places." The old gentleman looked up, and immediately answered: "So I perceive; you certainly keep your footing remarkably well."

A witty nobleman once asked a clerical gentleman at the bottom of the table, why the goose, when there was one, was always placed next to the parson. "Really, my lord," said the clergyman, "your question is somewhat difficult to answer, and so remarkably odd, that I vow I shall never see a goose again without being reminded of your lordship."

However patriotic or brave we may imagine ourselves to be, it is perhaps not always advisable to boast of the same, or a cutting retort may await us, similar to that once received by a French officer, who, in a bombastical manner reproached a Swiss, with whom he was quarrelling, with his country's custom of fighting on either side for money; "while we Frenchmen," said he, "fight for honour."—"Sir," replied the Swiss, "I have no doubt we all fight for what we need most."

It is also as well to assure ourselves that we are on the right side ere we venture to accuse anyone wrongfully. In the "good old times" some soldiers robbed a night-watchman of his coat, boots, and money. The next day he repaired to the Captain of the regiment to complain of his misfortune. The Captain at once asked him whether he had on at the time the same things he was then wearing. "Yes, sir, the very same," replied the poor man. "Then, in that case, my good fellow," rejoined the Captain, "I can positively assure you that the paltry rascals do not belong to my distinguished company, otherwise they would have left you neither waistcoat, trousers, nor shirt."

To be equal to the occasion is with some persons a natural gift. We may mention an incident in connection with the famous French Marshal Bassompierre. During his incarceration in the Bastille, he was observed by a friend one morning to be diligently turning over the leaves of a Bible, whereupon the friend enquired what particular passage he was looking for. "One that I cannot find," was the reply, "a way to get out of this prison." On his coming out of prison Louis XIII. asked him his age. Fifty was all that the gallant soldier would own to. To the surprised look of the king, Bassompierre answered: Sire, I subtract ten years passed in the Bastille, because I did not employ them in your Majesty's service." Some years, however, before this, when serving in the capacity of ambassador to Spain, he was telling the Court how he first entered Madrid. "I was mounted on the very smallest mule in the world'—— "Ah!" interrupted the joke-loving king, "it must indeed have been an amusing sight to have seen the biggest ass in the place mounted on so small a quadruped." With a profound obeisance, came the quiet rejoinder: "I was your Majesty's representative."

News from the Field.

PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF LONDON AND SOUTH-EASTERN COUNTIES.—The annual meeting was held at Essex Church, Kensington, on Tuesday, October 8th. The roll embraces fifty-one congregations, and 112 ministers and delegates answered to their names. The sermon, preached by the Rev. Edgar Dophyn, was on "The Power of the Holy Spirit." At the business meeting the treasurer, Mr. W. Baily, announced an income of £610. Subsequently a "Public Questions Committee" was appointed, to take cognisance of public and national questions in which moral and religious issues are involved. The evening meeting, presided over by Mr. Freeston, was largely attended. Addresses were given by the Revs. H. Gow and Joseph Wood, and by Messrs. D. Martineau, Harold Wade, and John Harrison. A most successful series of meetings, their pleasure enhanced by the generous hospitality of the Esssx Church.

MANCHESTER. — MOSS SIDE UNITARIAN FREE CHURCH.—This fine new church, erected at a cost of £6000 and providing accommodation for 500 persons, was opened on Saturday, October 5th, when a dedication service was conducted by the Rev. Charles Roper,

B.A., and a sermon preached by the Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter. May our friends have a prosperous career in their new home.

MINISTERS' SUPERANNUATION FUND.—A conference held on Tuesday, October 1st, at Birmingham, under the auspices of the Midland Christian Union, passed a resolution expressing the belief that the establishment of the Ministers' Superannuation Fund (which Professor Estlin Carpenter had explained) would prove of great importance to the welfare both of ministers and congregations, and earnestly commending to the churches of the Midland Christian Union the scheme now presented by the committee on the basis adopted at Leicester in April, 1900. The meeting was also addressed by Mr. Chatfield Clarke, and the Revs. L. P. Jacks, J. C. Street, and Joseph Wood. The chair was taken by Mr. Archibald Kenrick. Meetings in promotion of the fund have also been held at Leicester, Manchester, Leeds, and Liverpool. Only £4000 is now required to complete the £20,000 which the Conference asked for.

BIRMINGHAM: CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH.—The anniversary of the Sunday Schools and Home Mission was celebrated on Sunday, Oct. 13, the Rev. H. Gow, of Leicester, being the special preacher. On Monday evening the annual meeting was held, the chair being taken after tea by Councillor J. S. Nettlefold. Satisfactory reports were presented by Mr. W. B. Kenrick and Miss L. A. Smith on behalf of the schools, and by Mr. W. J. Tranter, the missionary. The Rev. L. P. Jacks, who had to be in Oxford for the opening of the College session, wrote regretting his absence, and expressing a hope that the deficiency in the teaching staff of the schools would be supplied.

SHEFFIELD: UPPER CHAPEL.—On Thursday week a large gathering was held in Channing Hall to welcome the Rev. J. E. Jenkins, formerly of Dowlais, as assistant minister. Mr. A. J. Hobson took the chair, and speeches of welcome to Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins were made by the Revs. J. E. Manning, J. Ellis, and W. Stephens; Messrs. Hunt, Laycock, and Moody.

OXFORD.—The new session of Manchester College began on Monday, October 14th, when an able and interesting address was given by the Rev. L. P. Jacks, M.A., in which he advocated the founding of a "Preaching Order," to be set apart for promoting Liberal Religion in other quarters than our settled churches. We hope to return to Mr. Jacks' paper on a future occasion.

The Guild Movement.

We are glad to report that the NATIONAL CONFERENCE GUILD'S UNION has made a satisfactory start. In addition to the leaflet on *The Guild Idea*, which we re-published last month, the Union has compiled and issued a useful and admirable "*Manual of Services and Prayers for Guild Meetings.*"* It consists of five services, each dominated by a leading thought. They are "Spiritual Worship," "Consecration," "Thanksgiving," "Aspiration and Endeavour," and "Disciples of Jesus." The services are largely responsive, and will be all the better rendered if a small Guild choir can be trained to give the responses to simple and suitable music. The manual also contains an order for the reception of members, morning and evening prayers, and prayers for special occasions. It emphasies the religious side of the Guild movement, and will, we trust, he so widely and generally used as to furnish a bond of union between the various Guilds.

Four new Guilds have been formed, at Scarborough, Willert Street (Manchester), Carlisle, and Essex Church, London. At the latter place a most interesting meeting was held on Wednesday, October 9th, under the presidency of the minister—the Rev. F. K. Freeston—when the Rev. Joseph Wood gave an address on "The Work of a Guild."

The Guild's Union is preparing its first "Annual"—a little booklet, which will give information as to existing Guilds, hints as to the formation of Guilds, with suggestions for Bible study, and subjects for Guild discussion.

The following Guilds have joined the Union, Warrington, Leicester (Great Meeting), Stepney, Liverpool (Hope Street), Chowbent, Kidderminster, Sheffield (Upperthorpe, Birmingham (Old Meeting), Manchester (Willert Street). It is hoped that Guilds intending to join will send in their subscriptions as soon as possible. The Guild subscription is only 5s., and will need supplementing by subscriptions and donations from private persons interested in the Guild movement.

Churches and schools desirous of learning about Guilds should communicate with the secretary of the Union, the Rev. John Ellis, Sheffield.

* Copies, threepence each, can be obtained of the Rev. John Ellis, Pisgah House, Broomhill, Sheffield, or at the Bookroom, Essex Hall.

The distaff and the shears are not ours to know; our place is for ever at the loom. We cannot trace the threads, but in the mingling of warp and woof we may for a moment catch and follow some turn and the pattern.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

The Spider.

BOY.

Spider, spider, come to my call,
Spider, spider, come to my call,
Spider, spider, come to my call,
When I bid you, lazy old spider!

How many flies did you catch yesterday
With your delicate web and its silky display?
Come, tell me the state of your larder, I pray,
You shockingly gluttonous spider.

SPIDER.

My web was in luck, for I caught twenty flies,
Too near to the earth, but too far from the skies;
And I bundled them in with the other supplies,
Like a thrifty and long-headed spider.

Now some were fond lovers, who, buzzing of love,
Looked never around them, below or above,
But popped in my web as a hand to a glove,
In a manner approved by a spider.

And one is a maiden most lovely to see,
Whose colours betoken a splendid degree;
She will make a *bonne bouche* for the kind of high tea
That appeals to the taste of a spider.

But each of the other ones followed a trade,
One sewed with a needle, one dug with a spade,
And they're all of them greatly abased and afraid
Of their keeper, and eater, the spider.

When feeding time comes in the cool of the dew,
I shall sup on a plump but a truculent Jew,
Who, because he is caught, makes a pretty to-do
That provokes all the gorge of a spider.

When morning arrives with his forehead of gold,
I may breakfast on hot, or may breakfast on cold,
On a lad of last night, or a virgin too bold,
Who has tattered the web of the spider.

BOY.

Spider, spider, get you away,
Spider, spider, get you away,
Spider, spider, get you away,
When I bid you, you nasty old spider!

NORMAN GALE.

Caddie.

Caddie's a dog of gentle ways;
He loves a quiet life and stays
Indoors on cold and rainy days.

He curls himself up on a chair,
His wee legs hidden anywhere
You only see a mass of hair.

But speak his name, and then he'll ris
And look with calm and steady eyes,
Through tangled locks, supremely wise.

And when poor Caddie sits and blink
Before the fire, I know he thinks
Of happy days on northern links.

For that is where he used to stay;
And still at times he hies away
And sees in dreams the golfers play.

G. SETOUN.

Waves and Leaves.

Waves, waves, waves!
Graceful arches lit with night's pale gold
Boom like thunder through the mountains rolled,
Hiss and make their music manifold,
Sing and work for God along the strand.

Leaves, leaves, leaves!
Beautified by autumn's scorching breath,
Ivory skeletons carven fair by death,
Float and drift at a sublime command.

Thoughts, thoughts, thoughts!
Rolling wave-like on the mind's strange shore,
Rustling leaf-like through it evermore,
O, that they might follow God's good word.

WILLIAM ALEXANDER.

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